

THE  
BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

VOL. XXVIII.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 1843.

No. 9.

SPECTRAL ILLUSIONS.

Being an Extract from a Paper published by Dr. Paterson in the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal.

1.—THE subject of the first case which I shall relate is a man of spare habit of body, of industrious and extremely temperate habits, and of education superior to the station of life in which he is placed. His occupation, for a series of years, has been that of an itinerant umbrella-maker; that is to say, he makes umbrellas at home, and travels through the country afterwards selling them. On one of these excursions, after much exposure to wet, he was seized with severe inflammatory sore-throat, and afterwards with acute rheumatism. When the fever and rheumatic affection had passed off, he was left in a state of extreme debility; his digestive organs could not be brought into proper order, and he was subject to slight attacks of *tinnitus aurium* and giddiness of the head. About this time he became aware that the pages of all books appeared to him to be divided into two columns. This was especially annoying to him when he perused his larger print psalm-book, which he well knew, from long and frequent perusal, not to be divided into columns. This illusion was at first alone confined to the pages of his books, but soon everything that he looked at presented a dark, indefinite line dividing it into two halves. He has frequently pointed out to me a blank perpendicular space dividing every body, into which he said he thought he could introduce his hand. On several occasions he made rather serious mistakes, when he was able to go about and take walking exercise, by fancying that he was walking through a gap in a wall or paling, which illusion, however, disappeared upon his close approach. The most amusing, however, which he recounted to me, was an illusion which occurred to him in the streets of Edinburgh. It was among the first times that he had been able to go so far, and whilst walking along George's street or Queen's street (I am not sure which), he was astonished upon suddenly beholding the street divided in two halves, the one of which seemed to present a steep ascent, the other as steep a descent. The poor fellow said he was perfectly bewildered, yet nevertheless resolved, that, as he was going up to Edinburgh, the steep ascent was the one he ought to choose. He never fancied for a moment that this was an illusion, having never seen anything of the kind before, and fearlessly addressing himself to his journey, began to toil along the level street, as if he was going up a

hill, to the no small amusement of a variety of passengers, who appeared equally to him to be toiling up and down the ascent or descent.

Soon after he had commenced climbing this imaginary steep he discovered that he was still on level ground, and that it must be one of his illusions. This individual still enjoys very indifferent health, and not unfrequently illusions of a similar kind are witnessed by him. None have now been seen, however, for many months.

**CASE II.**—The next case is one of a very remarkable character; unfortunately, however, the illusion which I am about to describe only occurred once, and that at a considerable interval of time; but so strong is the recollection of it in the mind of the lady, that the most minute circumstances connected with it are at once recalled to her recollection; and I may state that, from the high respectability of the lady, the authenticity of the apparition is placed beyond the reach of question.

At the period of the occurrence which I am about to mention, Miss N. was just convalescent from an attack of slight fever, which had been of some duration, and had reduced her strength considerably. On the evening on which the illusion occurred, in the month of August, all the family had gone out early to an evening sermon, at some little distance. Miss N. not being allowed to go out at the time, was left the sole inmate of the house. Her father, an infirm old man, who seldom went much from home, was also out. She knew not, however, where he was, but fancied that he had gone to church with the other members of the family. It was a beautiful evening when they left the house, the day having been very warm, and the atmosphere sultry, but they had not left very long ere some heavy clouds began to collect over head, and to betoken a storm. The anticipations from the appearance of the sky were not long in being realized, as it came on a most dreadful night of lightning and thunder, accompanied with heavy rain. Miss N. seated herself at a front window to watch the storm, which was then raging violently; her mind unconsciously wandered upon her father, where he might be; if at church with the rest of the family, or elsewhere. Brooding upon this circumstance, and being still rather weakly, she was consequently thrown into a state of considerable alarm.

The above minute particulars are necessary to show the state of mind in which Miss N. was at the time of seeing the illusion, as well as the causes which produced that state. I may also here mention that the lady is not in the slightest degree a believer in superstitious appearances.

Miss N., in the state of mind which I have just described, fancied that her father had been killed in the storm, and becoming very uneasy regarding him, she went into a back room which he generally occupied, and near the fire of which he usually sat in a high-backed arm-chair. On entering the room Miss N. was astonished to behold the image of her father in his usual dress and attitude, and seated by the fire-side. Not fancying that it was an illusion, she immediately thought that he had entered the house without her having heard him, and going forward to lay her hand upon his shoulder, and inquire how he had got in, and repeating the word "father," she attempted to lay her hand upon his shoulder, but

it encountered vacancy, and she retired in alarm. As she was about to leave the room, however, she looked back and still saw the figure occupy the same position in the chair. After recovering from the first effects of her alarm, Miss N. determined to enter the room again, and investigate into whether the appearance which she had witnessed might not be caused by a peculiar arrangement of drapery, or something lying upon the chair. The same appearance, however, presented itself as before, and which she now became convinced was some spectral illusion. In this belief she looked at it from various sides and corners of the room, rubbed her eyes and changed her position in various ways, and it still appeared in the same attitude. She also left the room and came back again, but still the apparition was there.

Fully half an hour might elapse from the time that this lady first saw this apparition till it disappeared. She did not see it vanish, but it was still present when she entered the room three or four times, but on the fourth or fifth it was gone. The old gentleman was in good health at the time, and had been to church with the rest of the family, from which they all returned at the proper time, the storm having by that time passed over.

CASE III.—The subject of case third is a professional gentleman of high literary attainments. His narrative of the illusions is before me, and I shall nearly give them in his own words. It is necessary to premise, however, that he is an individual of a sanguineo-nervous temperament, and possesses a very powerful imagination. I have never been present at the time of his seeing any of the illusions which I am about to relate; but on several occasions have attended upon him professionally. On one of them he had a pretty smart attack of scarlatina, which was succeeded at no great interval by a very severe attack of typhus fever. During both of these diseases the excitement of his mind was great, and the phantoms of his imagination so numerous, so varied, so vivid, as to surpass anything that I had previously seen or since witnessed.

Before detailing the particular illusions of this gentleman, it seems of consequence to premise a peculiarity of vision to which he is subject, and which consists in the power of the retina of continuing impressions, and probably also of the mind to recal them. Thus he has often repeated the well-known experiment which we have mentioned of looking at a window at some distance from the eye, and then transferring the eye quickly to the wall. He has never been able, however, to see the change of color which Dr. Brewster describes as taking place when the object itself is succeeded by the spectral impression of it.

Mr. H., too, has frequently seen, on looking at a line of lamps on a street, and then suddenly turning his eyes to a dark cloud, the line of lights continuing for a considerable time there. On one occasion, says he, "When looking at the front of the Royal Institution, by gas light, and suddenly turning to the sky, I beheld the pillars almost as distinct as when I saw the real object." These two instances may be referred to the well-known power of retaining impressions. In the following instance, however, the impression must be considered as recalled to the retina by some

unconscious mental power. When walking with a friend one evening by moonlight, Mr. H. happened to look up and beheld the vane of a single staff, having a crown on it, exactly on the lunar surface. So forcible was the impression that he directed the attention of his friend to it, and continued to look at it for a few minutes. They then proceeded onwards, and had passed a large building before they again saw the moon, when to the sight of Mr. H. the image of the crown and vane still presented itself on the surface of the moon, as distinct as the real object a few minutes before. These phenomena do not occur to Mr. H. at all times, but he has always the power, when looking at a window, and then turning his eyes to the wall, of seeing the window again on the wall.

The first distinct spectral illusion of which Mr. H. became conscious occurred in the autumn of the year 1838. He was lying on a sofa reading, being in his usual good health at the time; and that the subject could have no influence in exciting such ideas, it may be mentioned that the work in the course of perusal was De Comines's History of the House of Burgundy. On looking towards the window, through which the rays of light were entering and falling brightly on a chair placed near it, he saw a skull, and of course conceiving it to be a reality, was on the point of ringing a bell to inquire why it had been brought into that room, thinking it was one belonging to himself, which had been placed there by some of the family. He, however, rose and walked to the chair, was on the point of placing his hands upon it to lift it, when it disappeared. Mr. H. felt so startled at this circumstance that he nearly fell on the floor, and a slight giddiness continued during the remainder of the afternoon.

2d. About a fortnight after the occurrence just related, and about the beginning of November, 1838, Mr. H., when sitting in the rhetoric class room of the Edinburgh University, conversing with a friend before lecture, turned his eyes suddenly towards the window, and then on the desk, which extends along the room, and on which the light was falling at the time, he again beheld the skull. So convinced was he of the reality of the appearance that he immediately said to his friend, "I wonder what the Professor is going to do with the skull to-day." Doubtless very much to his friend's astonishment.

3d. After reflecting on these cases it occurred to Mr. H. that he had for months before seen people on the road coming towards him, and often wondered where they had so suddenly gone to. He had at the time no idea that they were illusions, but a few days' experience satisfied him of their nature.

4th. One evening, towards dusk, whilst sitting in the garden, Mr. H. rose suddenly and experienced a slight giddiness, which he was in the habit of feeling occasionally when rising quickly to the erect posture. As the giddiness went off he beheld the figure of a man, with a large blue cloak thrown around him, and standing under a tree at a short distance; the figure, in the course of a minute or two (during which Mr. H. stood gazing at it) gradually became more faint in outline and color, and disappeared. About half an hour afterwards, on gazing from the house again into the garden, under the same tree, and in the same spot, he



beheld the same figure. It occurred to him that it was an excellent opportunity for trying Dr. Brewster's test of deciding between illusions and realities; he therefore pressed the one eyeball, without producing any other effect than simply rendering the figure less distinct, but on squinting he distinctly saw the figure doubled to as great an extent as a real object, by the same process. Mr. H. immediately walked towards the figure, which gradually receded, and disappeared as soon as it cleared the shadow of the tree.

5th. I shall relate this in Mr. H.'s own words. "During my attendance at school I was in frequent intercourse with a boy, whom I shall call D—: he was, in short, my intimate acquaintance in boyhood for many years, until, by the continued dissipation of an infatuated father, the circumstances of the family began to decline, and, step by step, they became reduced to the greatest wretchedness. In the course of a few years D— was sent to sea, as the speediest method of getting rid of him. I consequently lost sight of him for many years, until at length I heard that he had returned to his wretched home, laboring under symptoms of advanced consumption. He was attended during his illness by Dr. C., and three months after his return home he died. I was requested to attend the inspection of the body, and it will readily be believed that many reflections of a sad and painful nature occurred to me, producing an impression upon my mind which several years failed to dissipate. This occurred in 1835, and three years afterwards, the circumstances of the family having continued the same, their unhappy case was again recalled to me in the following singular manner:—One evening, at the time when I was daily in the habit of seeing spectral illusions, I was engaged in reading Tyler's Life of the Admirable Crichton for a considerable time after the rest of the family had retired for the night, and after I had finished my book, and was on the point of proceeding to my bed-room, I saw a letter lying on a side-table, which proved to be an invitation to attend the funeral of D.'s mother. This was the first intimation I had had of her death; and many painful circumstances connected with her unhappy life, which need not be mentioned here, occurred to me. I proceeded to my bed-room, reflecting upon these circumstances, undressed myself, and had extinguished the candle, when I felt my arm suddenly grasped a little below the shoulder, and forcibly pressed to my side. I struggled to free myself for a time, calling aloud 'let go my arm,' when I distinctly heard the words 'don't be afraid,' uttered in a low tone. I immediately said, 'allow me to light the candle,' when I felt my arm released; and I then proceeded to another part of the room for means to light the candle, never for a moment doubting but that some one was in the room. I at the same time felt an uneasy giddiness and faintness, which almost overpowered me. I succeeded, however, in lighting the candle, and, turning towards the door, I beheld the figure of the deceased D— standing before me. It was dim and indistinct, as if a haze had been between us, but at the same time perfectly defined. By an impulse I cannot account for, I stepped towards it with the candle in my hand; it immediately receded at the same rate as I advanced, and

proceeding thus with the face always towards me, it passed through the door slowly down stairs till we came to the lobby, when it stood still. I passed close to it and opened the street door, but at this moment I became so giddy that I sank down on one of the chairs, and let fall the candle. I cannot say how long I remained in this situation, but on recovering I felt a violent pain over my eyebrows, with considerable sickness and indistinctness of vision. I passed a feverish and restless night, and continued in an uneasy state during the following day. I may mention that the figure was at times more distinct than at others, but always dim and imperfect. I was always able to distinguish the different colors of the clothes, and I had never seen the individual during life dressed in a similar way. In all its characters it approximated the illusions of fever more than any other which I have witnessed, and I never for a moment could have considered it a real object. It is difficult in this instance to find any other exciting cause except the pain felt in my arm, which I can now refer to cramp of the triceps muscle acting on the peculiar state of mind incident to spectral illusions, together with a powerful imagination, already greatly excited by the peculiar circumstances of the case. I may state that I have felt the same feeling in the arm since, without associating it with any similar consequences."

In connection with this gentleman's illusions, it is proper to state that another member of the family has been affected with that peculiarity of vision, by which only one half of the object is seen at a time, such as one half of a figure on the street, or, as in the case of Wollaston, one half of the name on a door or signboard. Immediately succeeding the occasions on which these phenomena occurred, the lady was always affected with violent headache, and frequently with severe epistaxis.

It was Mr. H.'s intention to have detailed to the world the numerous instances on which these phenomena have occurred to him; "but," says he, "when I reflected on the subject, I always found the illusions increased to such an extent, that they became occasionally truly alarming." Indeed, it was with difficulty that I could persuade him to write out for me short notes of the appearances, and this at a considerable interval of time after they had ceased entirely, lest they should again return.

CASE IV.—A gentleman in the south country, in the prime of life, and in perfect good health, was paying a visit one evening towards dusk to a neighboring friend. After shutting the avenue-gate, and as he was about to proceed up the avenue, the figure of a female dressed in black glided past immediately before him. Soon after, another figure, precisely similar in appearance and dress to the former, followed. Thinking that this might be some trick which the females of the house were about to play upon him, he stretched out his hand to grasp the third as she made her appearance, but, lo! there was nothing there, and, upon looking after the figure, it had vanished. Shortly afterwards, in crossing through one of the parks in the neighborhood of the house, he fancied he saw several asses grazing, and he was about to lay his hand upon the back of one of them and stroke it down, when, to his dismay, his hand encountered

nothing. They still, however, appeared for a time before him, and he tried the experiment of touching them with his hand several times.

It is probable that this gentleman (who is still alive and well) had been much exhausted by fatigue at the time when this illusion occurred to him, as it more resembles some of the apparitions of the early stage of *delirium tremens* than any that has been previously recorded.

CASE V.—I have been favored, through the kindness of Dr. Duns-mure, with the history of an interesting spectral illusion which occurred to a medical gentleman, a friend of his, and which is detailed below in the gentleman's own words.

"Some four or five years since, a middle-aged, respectably-dressed man, a stranger in Edinburgh, expired suddenly in a public omnibus, when passing along the North Bridge. The body was placed in the police office till claimed by the friends. Next day I received from the authorities the usual warrant to make an examination, and report as to the cause of death. (Rupture of an aneurism into the pericardium.)

"On entering the apartment where the body lay, clad as when in life, and attired as for a journey, I was informed of the affecting incident narrated above, and I naturally felt deeply interested by a calamity in itself so appalling, and probably most painfully eventful to others. This feeling was, moreover, greatly heightened at the time on observing more closely the features of the dead man. The countenance was remarkably open and intellectual, and its general expression pleasingly striking and attractive, even to an extreme. The impression on my mind, however, gradually wore off, and was in a manner forgotten, when unexpectedly recalled at a distant period in the following manner:

"I had been employed for a few days in writing on a professional subject, and it so happened that, of a forenoon when thus engaged, on raising my eyes from the paper, the vision of the dead stranger stood before me, with a distinctness of outline as perfect as when I first saw him extended on a board. His very apparel was identical, only that the broad-brimmed hat, which formerly lay by his side, now covered his head; his eyes were directed towards me; the peculiar benignity of expression which before struck me so much, now beamed from his countenance. In a few minutes he disappeared.

"I may remark, however, that, when the image was quite distinct, I could, after an effort of the eye, discover through its person a print of Caractacus hanging on the opposite wall."

The gentleman who witnessed the above-described illusion has had various personal experiences in connection with the subject. He is at present in good health, and was in perfect health at the time that the above illusion occurred to him.

The illusion we have just described is of a most interesting description, not only as regards the state of health in which the individual was at the time, but also as regards the illusion itself. It was simply a recalled impression, and ought, therefore, to have been placed first in the list of cases recorded in the present paper. The mind of Dr. — had been deeply impressed at the time of the occurrence, and more especially

with the peculiarity of dress and benignant aspect of countenance of the deceased. The circumstance connected with it had almost passed from his memory, until, after close mental application for some days on a professional subject, it is probable that a train of ideas, of which he might not at the time be aware, brought again to his recollection the form and aspect of the individual in whose fate he had felt such a deep interest; and, as when an individual, with a striking object before him, turns his attention upon some distant one, the recollected image of the latter, for a moment, excludes the perception of the former; so with Dr. —, the image of the deceased was portrayed before him with great accuracy of outline; nevertheless, and nothing daunted, he tried the experiment of looking at objects through the image, and distinctly saw a plate of Caractacus, which he knew to be hanging on the wall, as it were through the spectre. Thus was his experiment very similar to the one we mentioned above.

The close mental application, combined with a constrained position at the time, or probably some derangement of stomach, of which he might not be aware, was the cause of that pathological condition of the brain or membranes which had given rise to the illusion.

The last illusion which I have recorded of Mr. H. appears to me one of the most singular which has been described, or of which I am aware. In cases first, second, fourth and fifth, as well as in the majority of those on record, sight alone was the sense affected. In Mr. H.'s case, however, his vision, his hearing and touch, were equally brought into error. It must have been truly alarming when his three senses were thus deceived; and we cannot wonder that he was overcome with horror towards the termination of the illusion.

Nicolai heard the phantoms of his imagination talk to him, and some of them even addressed him at considerable length. Mrs. A., too, whose case Dr. Brewster has related, frequently heard what she conceived to be the voice of her husband calling to her by name.—*London Medical Gazette.*

---

#### PNEUMONITIS AND PLEURO-PNEUMONITIS.

[Communicated for the Boston Med. and Surg. Journal.]

IN New England, where pneumonic inflammations are so common and so often fatal, too much can scarcely be said on the treatment of these complaints.

When the practitioner is called early, unless the age or idiosyncrasy of the patient prove a barrier to the active treatment required, such cases are easily cured by free and repeated general and local bleeding, tart. antimony, mercury, external irritation, &c. But when the physician is called late in the case, when the symptoms have continued without the least mitigation until the powers of life have already begun to yield to the active disease under which they are laboring, when the symptomatic fever has begun to assume the typhoid character, and fatal organic lesions are about to take place, what is to be done? The time for venesection,

antimony, &c., has unfortunately passed by. In calling the attention of the profession to the treatment of such cases, the writer of this article lays no claim to originality, but believes we all need "line upon line and precept upon precept" with regard to many points pertaining to the healing art.

The effect of mercury in equalizing the circulation, and consequently its power of reducing local inflammations, is well known to the profession. But in no case are its effects more manifest than in acute thoracic disease, especially in that late stage of pneumonitis, when the powerful means depended upon at first, cannot be resorted to with safety to the patient. In order to ensure success in such cases, it is impossible to introduce the remedy into the system with sufficient rapidity through the stomach; for the case soon terminates fatally unless a sudden check is given to its progress. Large blistering plasters should be at once applied to the whole anterior and lateral parts of the thorax, and as soon as vesication is effected the cuticle should be removed and the ung. hyd. portion applied in abundance to the denuded surface, and continued till the specific effects of the remedy are manifest. At the same time the proto-chloride, in small and frequently-repeated doses, combined with the pulv. ip. comp. or opium, should be administered internally, together with occasional laxatives and mucilaginous expectorants.

Whenever the mercury begins to show its specific effects, it is, indeed, surprising how soon the severest symptoms of pulmonary inflammation give way under its influence. The expectoration becomes free—the skin and tongue moist—respiration full and easy, and a rapid convalescence may be confidently expected, unless serious organic change has taken place previous to the commencement of this course of treatment. Serous effusions within the cavity of the chest are soon absorbed under the mercurial influence combined with diuretics. In the cases under consideration no time is to be lost, and the medical man never need fear any unpleasant results from this mode of treatment. The mercurials may always be discontinued when the disease is removed or the action of the remedy fully manifest. In most cases recovery is rapid and complete, if we are permitted to see the patient as soon as the fourth day of the disease. After that period such changes of structure have usually taken place as to put the case beyond the power of medicine to relieve, especially if the attack be of the most acute kind. The writer of these remarks is firm in the belief that many valuable lives are lost by this disease, that might be saved by vigorously adopting the above mode of treatment.

Dr. Stokes, with some other writers of the present day, is of opinion that the specific effects of mercury are manifested as the "result rather than the cause of the reduction of disease." As mercury is ordinarily administered, the above remark of Dr. S. may hold true, for what practitioner is to be found who has not seen the "vacillating" effect of the remedy when given in the usual way? If introduced into the system with sufficient rapidity, we shall seldom be disappointed with its effects, our main reliance being upon its reception into the circulation by cutaneous absorption.

WILLIAM BROWN.

*Chester, N. H., March 20th, 1843.*

## NEW METHOD OF TREATING HERNIA.

[ALTHOUGH the following communication is anonymous, its historical character induces us to give it insertion. The name of the inventor of the new, and, as it appears, unrevealed method of accomplishing a radical cure, constitutes another claim to notice ; but it is lamentable that a professional man, who might secure a permanent distinction by an achievement so important in the annals of surgery, has obliterated all claims to the gratitude of philanthropists, if it is true that a *patent right* locks it up from all, save those who purchase the privilege of using it. Mention was made in this communication of a medical gentleman in Boston who practises upon this novel system ; but knowing that any gentleman of the regular medical corps would have just cause for offence were his name coupled with nostrums, secret remedies or patent-right practice, particularly from an anonymous source, we have wholly omitted that part of the paper on our own responsibility.]

The subject of hernia is one of much interest, and has claimed the attentions of the world for a long period of time. It is in itself a troublesome complaint, frequently dangerous, and sometimes destroys life. Frequent attempts have been made for a radical cure of this evil ; but these attempts have always failed. Men, after all, have had to be contented with palliations, and support their infirmities as well as they could. And so we have gone on from the days of Noth, so far as we know, to the present time.

Surgeons, in every country, of active minds and ready hands, have exerted themselves to remove the troubles of hernia. Sharpe, in England, employed a method from which he thought he had reasonable hopes. It consisted in the application of the actual cautery to the integuments covering the abdominal ring, by which he hoped to produce a condensation and contraction of parts sufficient to prevent the escape of the abdominal contents. All his endeavors, however, failed of success. After him Scarpa, in Italy, paid great attention to the subject. He had fine opportunities for observation, made a good use of his practical experience, wrote more largely upon his favorite subject than any other man, and left it where he found it. Lately, the subject has received a large share of attention in France, and especially at the Hotel Dieu. M. Velpeau, a surgeon of great celebrity, has brought his fine powers to the subject. He has attempted a new method of cure by making an incision in the integuments over the ring, and performing such other operations upon the parts beneath as he thought judicious. He has, however, essentially failed.

Since the failure of M. Velpeau's endeavor, new trials have been made in England with hopes of accomplishing this important object. Instead of incisions, the gentlemen of that country have employed stitches, hoping to bring on such inflammation and condensation of parts, as should be necessary for success, but their endeavors have been to little purpose.

Trusses of various construction have been employed from time immemorial, in order to palliate what they could not cure. They have been



infinitely varied in their form and size, and new inventions have been thrown upon the public, until they have literally become an evil; and we are happy to say, that they will not much longer be needed.

It has been reserved for this country to accomplish what the rest of the world has not been able to do; and much credit is due to the gentleman who offers us this new mode of treating hernia. The method of cure consists of an operation, which is attended with but little pain, and is simple and not difficult of performance. The parts, however, upon which this operation is performed, are very important, and the operator should be well acquainted with their anatomy. He should know when and where to begin his work, and when and where to end it.

The inventor of this new method of treatment is Professor Janes, of St. Louis. He has patented his instrument, and, of course, the manner of using it.

Boston, March 17th, 1843.

#### OBLITERATION OF THE SAPHENA MAJOR VEIN.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

I HAVE recently obliterated a portion of the "saphena major" vein for a troublesome ulcer on the leg, with success, and in the following manner: The patient is a stout, healthy man, 22 years old. The saphena was varicose from above the knee some three inches or more, through all its divisions below. On the inside of the knee it was greatly distended, forming a complete *cul-de-sac*. The ulcer above the ankle had existed two years, and had resisted the usual means of laced stockings, bandages, &c.

The operation consisted in passing a pin, necessarily a long one, underneath the vein in the thigh, about three inches above the knee. A ligature of moderate size was looped around the pin with a single knot, and drawn sufficiently tight to interrupt the circulation. A large surgeon's needle was then passed through the vein, inclosed in the loop, to wound its internal coat—and when withdrawn the operation was completed by the hare-lip suture. Another pin was passed two inches below the knee, in the manner described above.

Considerable pain for a few hours followed the operation, but no inflammation ensued except in the space between the pins, and this was dissipated by an evaporating cloth, dipped in spirit and water. In three days the entire contents of the vein between the pins was absorbed. The upper pin was drawn on the fifth day, and the lower one on the sixth. There was some ulceration about the pins, which healed readily. The ulcer on the leg disappeared spontaneously, and the skin resumed a healthy complexion, and at the end of "one little month" the patient is at his labor as a carpenter.

JOSEPH H. FLINT.

*Note.*—The ligatures should not be drawn so tight as to endanger sloughing, nor the pins suffered to remain so long as to produce ulcera-

tion. In the above case I think the pins might have been drawn the third day.

*Springfield, March 15, 1843.*

#### DR. HAMILTON'S VALEDICTORY.

[We present a few more extracts from the address of Dr. Hamilton, delivered at Geneva, N. Y.]

#### PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

Need I say to you, that it pertains to your interest to be gentlemen in your general address and attire. Foppery is contemptible, and a vain affectation of singularity in dress. The man who copies, with servile accuracy, every change of fashion, and the man who aims at universal eccentricity, are antipodes; but alike fools in the estimation of all sensible men. But physicians, mostly, are to be censured for an indifference to dress, rather than for an ambition to be fashionable or eccentric. This is probably most true of those who practise in the country. It is difficult for those who ride much over roads rough and miry, through rain and storm, by night and by day, to pay much attention to their toilet; nor is it expected. But is it not true that city as well as country physicians often slide into habits of personal slovenliness, not warranted by the exigencies of their case? And sometimes have even erred so far as to prefer the ragged and thread-bare vesture of the humblest plebeian, and have practised, in their conversation, the most low and infamous scurrility; having persuaded themselves that in a Republic it is the true passport to the confidence and patronage of the people. But they have committed the unfortunate and capital mistake, of adopting slovenliness and blackguardism, instead of plainness and courteous familiarity.

Another established law of domestic police, these errorists have not learned, viz., that the ladies, and not the gentlemen, generally select the medical attendants. And who would stand in judgment before this tribunal with unwashed hands, or garments soiled? We appeal to them, now in your presence, to attest, whether in their creed, cleanliness and neatness, no less than a high and strict gentlemanly bearing, are not cardinal virtues, and whether in selecting a physician, their absence would not prove an insuperable bar? Gentlemen, you do well to take heed to this lesson.

#### TRICKS FOR CREATING A REPUTATION.

Others entertain their patients, on every occasion, with curious cases and remarkable cures, in their practice, among which, fortunately, are not a few bearing an exact resemblance to the features of the case in hand.

Others, again, are forever yawning, and complaining of the loss of sleep and fatigue; an illy-conceived plan of boasting of their practice without seeming to have designed it.

And yet others, less wary, do never hesitate, openly and publicly to proclaim, to whomsoever they meet, the incredible extent of their busi-

ness. Wherever they move they seem enveloped in a cloud of pestilence, and their approach is heralded by the most fearful accidents and calamities. Now on foot—now on horse; yet ever posing, like Gilpin on his merry wedding-day, they fail not to arrest the attention and wonder of all the peaceable inhabitants.

These are all "tricks of the trade," which you will hold in just contempt. They are too shallow not to be exposed, and seldom fail to excite ridicule and disgust, rather than admiration or surprise. If any are spared by such devices, they are generally those whose patronage is not worth the trick.

As a precept of value, let me enjoin upon you strict attention to your office. "Keep your office and your office will keep you," is an old and just maxim. You are not indeed to shut yourselves within your cell, and, like Diogenes, with cynical indifference avoid all who approach you. Neither are you to obtrude yourselves officiously at all places, or seek acquaintances at shops or coffee-houses. The friends made at such places are neither valuable nor permanent. I rejoice in the free and social chat, and the unrestrained merriment of an hour when ennui, or its parent dyspepsia, gripes my spirits; but such recreations must be enjoyed moderately and with discretion: "*misce stultitiam consiliis brevem.*"

#### AN IMPORTANT LESSON.

Be uniformly courteous to rival practitioners. Never permit a word or intimation to escape your lips, reflecting upon the professional character of a brother, unless he is fully shown to be unsafe and unworthy the confidence of the people. You will soon be a participator in all the many and inevitable vexations and trials of those who practise our art, and you should feel towards them as kinsmen and fellow-soldiers—bound by the same ties—liable to the same misfortunes, and engaged in the same great enterprise of doing battle with the king of terrors. With them you are to stand in the post of peril, when the arrows of death fall thick around you, and meet the foe, hand to hand and hilt to hilt. Physicians, let me remind you, are of all persons most sensitive to any imputation upon their reputation; their professional fame they hold dearer than life: for, of all men, save only the ministers of Christ, their responsibilities are greatest. Who would not feel a glow of honest indignation, and a rising of soul which could not be suppressed, if accused of having sacrificed the life of a patient, through ignorance or neglect—perhaps a brother, or a sister, or a wife? Such a vital thrust would make the very heart quiver and struggle, to burst from its casement; and the emotions could no more be repressed than the heavings of a volcano. Herein we only confess that we are human, and "subject to like passions with other men."

#### STUDY AND OBSERVATION.

In study be unremitting, remembering that the sciences of medicine and surgery are progressive, and if it is possible that you have mastered all of each which is to-day known, to-morrow will add new discoveries with which you are bound to become acquainted. If you relax in your

industry, a few years will leave you far in the rear ; and at length, like some ancient and obsolete volume, with broken back, covered with dust and cobwebs, you will rest in your quiet niche, without value, except as a reference for the antiquarian. Let not your years pass as in a vision, until, suddenly aroused by the concussion of some unusual event, you look back, and, astonished, find days, months and years forever gathered to the past ; but labor diligently, lest the evening approach when but half your work is done, and you are too late reminded of duties neglected or unwisely deferred. I have seen the brow of ripened manhood clouded, when reflecting that his morning of life was passed, and that his sun was high in mid-heaven : hitherto he had only been surveying the ground, and collecting the materials wherewith to build—not a stone was laid, nor a beam adjusted, in that vast edifice which he was preparing to rear. I have seen the old man sigh and mutter, that life was ended ; that his eyes were so untimely darkened, and his limbs so vexed with shivering palsy, that he must crawl into his grave and die, before he had accomplished a tithe of all he had designed. But how calm and even, and ever ascending is the path of him who takes all note of time, and fills each cycle in his daily flight ; with steady pace, he presses onward, and each day reaches another step along the rugged acclivity of fame. Yet I would not wish you to seem to advance too rapidly, lest stepping incautiously upon a loosened fragment, you are hurried precipitately to the bottom. It is by slow and gradual increment that the clearest crystals are formed ; and the lofty oak, monarch of the forest, was for many years an uncommonly dwarfish shrub—the sport and ridicule of all those rapid and exuberant growths, over whose broken trunks he now spreads his regal branches. In science, as in civil economy, a rapid rise, based upon credit and speculation, never fails to end in losses and bankruptcy ; but whoever each day adds one fact to his previous stock, and so digests, analyzes, and arranges this, as that it may be always used when occasion calls for it, has no reason to be discouraged. His attainments will soon claim notice and respect, and he will, ere long, rival the scholarship of the most learned.

---

### THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

---

APRIL 5, 1843.

---

*Eastern Asylum, Williamsburg, Virginia.*—It behooves our friends of the Yankee insane hospitals to revise their rules for ascertaining their proportion of cures, or they will soon find themselves in the back-ground as far as the *statistics* are concerned. Some person has sent to our address "The [First ?] Annual Report of the Physician and Superintendent of the Eastern Asylum in the city of Williamsburg, Virginia, for 1842." The following extract presents a view of the success of this institution. For the *Italics* we are responsible.

"I have selected, therefore, as a measure of our success, the cases admitted in [into] the institution during twelve months, that is, *during the year preceding the last six months*, and in the statement of their recoveries, have, as it were, summed up the results of our treatment during the *last eighteen months*: in this length of time giving *also* a fair opportunity to each case to be properly acted upon by the treatment. [We would respectfully recommend to our friend, Mr. Shattuck, of the Statistical Association, as the deepest skilled of any gentleman of our acquaintance, to expound and elucidate the data above, on which premises the results hereafter to be presented appear to depend.] Of recent cases, Sir William Ellis, the late Superintendent of the Middlesex Asylum at Hanwell, stated that he cured about 90 per cent.. Dr. Burrows, who was also celebrated for his success, cured 91.32. In the Massachusetts State Hospital, under the superintendence of Dr. Woodward, from the year 1833 to 1840, the cures amounted to 87.25; in 1840, the amount [proportion?] was 91.25. But the instance quoted in nearly all the late British writers on insanity, who appear to regard it as the highest known to them, is taken from Capt. Hall's Travels in America. He mentions that in one year 21 out of 23 recent cases recovered in the Hartford Retreat, or 91 3-10: this institution has arisen in its proportionate number even above this. *But we find that in none of these instances above given, does the success reach that which thus far has been obtained in this institution:* for, as we have observed above, 12 out of 13 have recovered, or 92.3."

"But, moreover, apart from its recovery, there was scarcely a favorable case among the twelve." The thirteenth man died, or else the ratio would have been 100; another was monomaniac with paralysis, of so unpromising a form that Sir Alexander Morrison observes, that in his extensive practice he had only met with one instance of recovery; three others were instances of *acute dementia*. [?]

"From such facts as the above, I am led to believe that there is no insane institution" the Retreat continues, "either on the Continent of Europe, or Great Britain, or in America, in which such *success is met with as in our own* [!!] There must *perhaps* be always some recent cases which defy all treatment, and what is gained in the number of recoveries one year may be lost in the next. But I think we may conclude, from what has been remarked, that a patient stands as fair prospect of recovery when brought to this institution, as when carried to any other in the Union."

In verity, the Report is safe in this conclusion, under the extensive facts presented. We believe that even in *favorable cases* few institutions have been able to cypher up so high a *figure*; how then could they try to do so if they had "scarcely a favorable case" amongst their recent cases? In our opinion the heads of the various institutions at the North will at once succumb and acknowledge themselves beat, as did the racoon when the redoubtable Capt. Martin Scott appeared at the foot of his tree armed with his long gun—long bow, we had like to have written.

While we rejoice in the success of this institution and its remarkable and unparalleled *cures*, or recoveries as they are usually styled at the North, the recommendation on the next page meets our full concurrence: "We *think*, that besides the bedding, most of the rooms should be furnished also with a *bedstead*, chair and table."

Our report, perhaps, lets us into the secret of the cures of these unfavorable cases. We admire that "*his utere mecum*" liberality; which

would not confine the use of new and valuable methods within the circle of one's own practice. "We shall go on," observes our reporter, "to mention the medical means most generally employed in this institution. These are narcotics, tonics, purgatives, counter-irritants and baths. The narcotic which we have used most frequently, and from which we have derived most benefit, is opium; or, what is similar, the acetate, muriate or sulphate of morphia. Of the former, we have used in general from six to twelve grains, and of the latter from one to two grains, thrice daily, *beginning with a smaller dose*. [We trust so; thirty-six grains of opium in a day to a subject not taught opium-eating, would be very likely to bring about "that sleep that knows no waking."] We have also employed opium in one or two cases, in a manner that we believe is peculiar [and which we would hope may be patented] to ourselves; that is, mixing it with tobacco and causing the patient to smoke it; *internally, we use its solution in brandy*."

From these extracts, the character of a document from what we suppose to be a State institution of Virginia, may be drawn. Every page appears to be obnoxious to equally severe criticism, *mais le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*.

The writer, we should have but little doubt from the internal evidence, is quite a young man, one who is evidently not without zeal and talent, and who shows in his quotations that he has read the modern works on his subject. The regret is, that he should not have submitted his manuscript to some judicious friend, who would doubtless have advised him to strike out everything which sounds like self-praise. He may rest assured that if he is one of the happy few born to be an inventor of means of usefulness, the world will not be less slow to find it out because he declines to blow his own trumpet. Before he shall have reached the middle of life in the service of the insane, he will probably find that all patients who *seem well* are not radically cured; that *the inordinate use of narcotics will stupefy more maniacal subjects into dementia or impaired faculties* than will be restored to original soundness; and in mental as in other forms of disease, the older he grows the less confidence will he feel in his own abilities in curing. Nature cures; the medical man sees that she has a fair field for her efforts, and the patient recovers.

---

*Neurology in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.*—An amusing story is circulating over the city in regard to some recent exhibitions in this last of the wonderfals, before a large committee of that venerable institution. It seems that Dr. Buchanan solicited an opportunity to demonstrate his discoveries before the Academy. A committee of ten was raised, of which an eminent citizen served as chairman. Four tedious sessions were wholly devoted to hearing and seeing whatever Dr. B. might be disposed to communicate or exhibit. The last meeting was too much of a farce to be any longer endured, without subjecting the grave and learned gentlemen to the hazard of being called a council of asses. They broke up in disgust, says report, when Mrs. F., of Mesmeric memory, was brought before their scientific honors, as a *remarkably impressible subject*. The organ of calorification was touched, which ought to have raised her temperature to summer heat, according to the new system; but mistakes will happen in the best-trained families—a fact that was curiously illus-



trated in the case of this accommodating lady, whose mercury, instead of rising, fell rapidly to zero, and she began to shiver beautifully, notwithstanding the calorimeter of her noddle was vigorously plied by the right good will of the doctor! A pamphlet is to be published, we understand, under the authority of the Academy, in which the interviews between Dr. Buchanan and the Committee will be minutely detailed, besides containing the opinions of the Academicians on the merits of the discovery of neurology and the claims of the discoverer to the attentions of scientific men.

---

*Mortality of the City of Lowell.*—In past times we have commended the very fair and acceptable manner in which the bill of mortality of Lowell is constructed. Without being technically obscure, it is scientific in nomenclature, and it has always been exceedingly neat in its typography. The whole number of deaths in 1842, was only 473. In 1840, the population was 20,981. An increase must have been made since that period; but admitting the population to have been stationary, the present table shows that the city of Lowell, the acknowledged Manchester of America, is favorable to health and longevity. Pulmonary consumption produced the greatest number of deaths of any one disease, 70; and typhus fever the next, 43.

A. D. Dearborn, M.D., the city physician, has appended the following observations to the last bill of mortality, which are exceedingly creditable to him, and speak well for his professional qualifications. He is not only a philanthropist in the truest sense, but sufficiently independent to suggest measures that would materially affect the pockets of landlords, without fearing the loss of his office.

"During the past year much has been done in the prevention of disease, and it is to be hoped that there will be no abatement in extending the improvements in progress for this object. The city government, however, cannot do every thing demanded for the better health of the city, unaided by individuals and a correct public sentiment. One abundant source of disease is found in the crowded, imperfectly ventilated dwellings, occupied by the poor in the west part of the city, and particularly in the basements, where the occupants are constantly exposed to a damp and vitiated atmosphere. Few are aware, who have not visited these cellars, of the large numbers who occupy them, and of the many discomforts and dangers to which they are exposed. These basements should never be rented as dwellings. Our citizens are urged to an examination of this subject. Lowell is distinguished for her liberal contributions to relieve foreign suffering, and to elevate those in other lands; but would not her philanthropy be equally deserving of commendation, if mainly confined within her own limits, or at least, if much more directed to the improving the condition of her own poor. It will be perceived that I speak not with regard to any supply of food or clothing—any extreme want of these the Overseers of the Poor can remedy—but there are other and far more grievous evils which call loudly for correction.

---

*Sarsaparilla.*—Medicines, like fashions, have their advocates and their day. Just at this juncture, pills and sarsaparilla are in vogue. News-

papers are laden with certificates that are disgusting on account of the miraculous cures which the proprietors of quack medicines pretend to have effected. Notwithstanding the fact that the reflecting part of the community understand the unblushing knavery that is practised by the manufacturers, agents and venders, they are outweighed in numbers by the duped consumers, who make the fortunes of those who cheat them out of both health and money.

In the preparations of sarsaparilla, however, there are some individuals who are morally honest, and who are commended by the profession, and receive their countenance and influence. Mr. A. H. Bull, of Hartford, Conn., conducts the business on a large scale, and seems to deserve patronage. There is no secret in the matter—no disposition to force a nostrum into market. We are assured that his compound extract is made from the best materials, and the active properties of the sarsaparilla extracted with diluted alcohol, which is evaporated by a water bath, at a low temperature. To each fluid drachm of the extract, there is added one fourth of a grain of iodine, in the form of a syrup, with one grain of the hyd. potass.

When a druggist thus openly announces his method of preparing an article as extensively used as this particular composition, and physicians of known integrity recommend it, we are bound to think well of it. If there is any difficulty in respect to our belief in its efficacy, it arises from the circumstance that too much is assumed to be executed by it. That in several chronic affections, it is an efficacious remedy, is not questioned.

Dr. Corbett, our Canterbury friend, has manufactured large quantities of sarsaparilla, which the New-Hampshire physicians prescribe with confidence, it seems, from the many commendatory notices some of them have given of its utility. R. P. J. Tenny, M.D., Loudon; J. S. Elliot, Pittsfield; Thos. Chadbourne, M.D., Wm. D. Buck, M.D., T. H. Haynes, M.D., Concord; and Josiah Crosby, M.D., of Meredith, are gentlemen whose testimony is not to be called in question. Although once informed of the process of making Dr. Corbett's concentrated sarsaparilla syrup, we cannot recollect the particulars, but think it not essentially different from the Hartford preparation, with the exception that it has no iodine in it.

Bound, as we are, to raise a warning voice against the abominable traffic in secret medicinal compounds, when an open, generous course is pursued like those alluded to in the foregoing observations, medical men are at once able to decide upon the value of the article, if it has any intrinsic value, and to make use of it; and it is gratifying, also, to discover that dealing in drugs does not universally overcome a sense of moral responsibility.

---

*Virginia Medical Prize Question.*—Another opportunity is presented to the persevering medical scholars of the U. States, for writing an essay on a subject that cannot fail of being serviceable to the profession. There is ample scope for those who may desire to investigate the subject of the modern treatment of fevers, or clear up obscurities, if any exist. The following note from an official source explains the object of the Medical Society of Virginia.

"The Medical Society of Virginia offers a gold medal for the best essay on 'The Value of Opium in the Treatment of Febrile Diseases.'

"It is required that the essay be sent in by the 1st of October, 1843, and be addressed, post paid, to the Corresponding Secretary. Each essay to be accompanied by a sealed note, giving the name of the author and the post office through which to communicate with him." F. MANN, Corresponding Secretary.

*Mistake in a Name.*—MR. EDITOR,—Will you be good enough to make the following correction of the report of the medical graduates in Harvard University, March, 1843. Willard Wild Codman for William Wild Codman. C.

*Medical Miscellany.*—Dr. J. King was announced to lecture at New Bedford, on animal magnetism. Lecturers are increasing on that subject—on account of its being a cash business.—Epidemic erysipelas, which has been marked by a distressing fatality in the northern parts of Vermont, is now gradually disappearing. All the new cases are represented to be of a mild character, and yield more readily to medical treatment.—The fossilized bones of a non-descript animal are in New York, which were dug up in Clark county, Alabama, about a year ago, and are very complete. The animal is supposed to have been 70 feet in length—and it is proposed to call it the zygonon. The bones are to be sent immediately to London.—Dr. Lewis amputated an arm on Thursday last, in consequence of diffused inflammation of the cellular membrane, without tourniquet.—Dr. Bartlett's valedictory address to the graduating class of Transylvania University, 1843, is much valued by his New England friends.—Dr. Pitcher has been elected Mayor of Detroit.—Eighty-three students were graduated at the University Medical School in New York, the other day. Dr. Mott delivered an excellent address, and in the evening the students partook of an elegant entertainment at his house.—La Pressa states that Dr. Ennemosea, of Munich, has just performed two extraordinary cures by means of animal magnetism. He succeeded, after an attendance of only eight days, in restoring the hearing to two persons who had been deaf during ten years. Last winter he cured, by the same treatment, a man of insanity whose recovery had been despaired of.—In consequence of the unusual mildness of the winter in Russia, and the continued rains, especially at St. Petersburg, fevers have raged extensively and violently; and scurvy, too, has been prevalent.—At Hastelpool, Eng., a woman in a violent rage, while making a charge against another woman before the police, dropped down dead.—In consequence of overworking children in manufacturing establishments, one quarter of the inhabitants of Lille, France, it is said, are so decrepid that not a man could be found, from 20 to 24 years of age, of sufficient size, strength and health for a soldier.—Dr. J. L. Day is the present Colonial physician at Monrovia, Africa, assisted by two colored physicians, who have had good opportunities for practice.

Number of deaths in Boston, for the week ending April 1, 36.—Males, 11; Females, 19. Stillborn, 2. Of consumption, 4—old age, 2—cancer, 1—child-bed, 1—burn, 2—disease of the heart, 1—small-pox, 2—disease of the brain, 1—bronchitis, 1—dropsy in the head, 1—intemperance, 1—drowned, 2—infantile, 3—lung fever, 2—inflammation of the lungs, 1—marasmus, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—paralysis, 1—stia, 1—bilious fever, 1.

Under 5 years, 14—between 5 and 20 years, 4—between 20 and 60 years, 8—over 60 years, 4.

*Employment of Ice in Hernia.*—The experience of Dr. Trusen, of Posen, goes to establish ice, administered internally, as superior to any other known agent for producing the cessation of the sickness and vomiting in strangulated hernia. A case of this nature occurred under his care, in which the hernia was of considerable size, and had been strangulated for some hours. The patient refused to submit to an operation. The vomiting and pain were irrepressible for any length of time by general or local bleedings, the external application of ice to the tumor, warm baths, during which the taxis was attempted, purging lavements, &c. At length Dr. Trusen administered clysters containing pieces of ice as large as a hazel nut or almond, every five or ten minutes, consequent on which not only the vomiting ceased, but a copious evacuation of the bowels took place, and the hernia was spontaneously reduced. The sudden shock given to the system by the employment of ice in this way seems to be in no wise injurious; indeed, the diminution of the morbid sensibility in the stomach, &c., is the most conspicuous of the symptoms following its use. Dr. Trusen recommends the invariable adoption of ice in a similar manner, without loss of time, on the occurrence of strangulation in hernia, by which means a surgical operation might, he says, be often rendered unnecessary. He adds, also, that the same method of employing ice is attended with like advantage in subduing the vomitings which accompany an attack of cholera.—*Hufeland's Journal.*

---

*Tracheotomy.*—Mr. Linnecar related a case, at a late meeting of the Medical Society of London, in which tracheotomy was successfully performed in a case of chronic laryngitis. The patient, a lady aged 40, had apparently suffered from a cold and hoarseness, which increased in severity until breathing became no longer possible, when an incision was made in the trachea and a tube introduced. This was retained six days, when the respiration had become free and the voice natural. There was no evidence of disease beyond the larynx. Mr. Pilcher stated that the operation was generally unsuccessful in infants; he had performed it on two, one with croup and the other with a foreign body in the air passages, both of whom died. Dr. Marshall Hall mentioned a case in which the operation was performed on a child, who died from the hemorrhage it produced. Dr. M. suggested that the operation might be useful in cases of apoplexy, in which patients sometimes die from impeded respiration in the larynx.

---

*The Mammoth Cave a Winter Resort for Invalids.*—We understand that our enterprising friend, Dr. Croghan, continues unremitting in his efforts to make this celebrated cavern a comfortable winter residence for persons affected with pulmonary disease, and who are unable in autumn to migrate to the South. We have been told of a medical gentleman, who spent several months within it, and came out greatly relieved of a pulmonary disorder—the particular kind was not mentioned to us. We hope that other physicians, who may labor under affections of the lungs, and do not reside at a convenient distance, will be induced to try its effects. Patients not of the profession, need not hesitate to go thither, on account of its involving a separation from their physicians, as Dr. Croghan spends most of his time there, and is well qualified to give them advice, although not now in the practice of his profession.—*Western Journal.*